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Woolwich

Flashing tower lights have neighbors seeing red

By

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Flashing lights on Central Maine Power company's new transmission towers have residents in one Woolwich neighborhood seeing red, literally.

Curtis Fish told the select board Monday night when in operation the flashing LED lights overly brighten the night sky, impacting the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Fish said CMP's previous towers were unlit; the new ones are taller. They're at Chops Point but can be seen from Temple Road. The transmission lines span the Kennebec River to West Chops Point in Bath.

"The lights pose a real economic issue for the town because they devalue property," Fish said. "Who's going to want to buy a home in this part of town with these lights blinking on and off all night long."

Fish, a real estate broker, told the board about 20 Woolwich homeowners live near the transmission towers and are impacted. Several couples accompanied him to the meeting and complained about the intensity of the lights in the night sky. The towers are also equipped with strobe lights that flash during the daytime.

Selectman Allison Hepler said the lights may have been installed to comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations and serve as warnings for low-flying aircraft. Wiscasset's municipal airport is several miles east of the towers.

Hepler, who is also Woolwich's State District 53 representative, is reviewing FAA regulations for tower illumination. She visited the neighborhood a week ago with Select Board Chair David King Sr. "The lights were off when we drove down there last week to have a look," she told the Wiscasset Newspaper.

"We still haven't seen what they look like when they're flashing," added Hepler.

"I've been in contact with Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and an effort is going to be made to contact affected property owners in Bath." Hepler added the office of Sen. Eloise Vitelli (D-Arrowsic) has been in contact with CMP officials about the lights.

Hepler said the Woolwich Select Board plans to contact CMP officials as well. “This is probably going to be a long process,” she said.

The Wiscasset Newspaper has sought comment from CMP.